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VOL. II.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1880.

NO. 14.

AUCTION

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MONEY TO LOAN.

SELF-EDUCATION

Of the Slaves of Louisiana.

In Three Parts—By Paul Gaston, A. M.
[CONCLUSION.]
PART III.

In New Orleans the same state of things existed, but as the number of free blacks, who had educational privileges was greater, it naturally followed that the difficulty of keeping the slaves in ignorance was proportionally enhanced, for notwithstanding the social disparity, intelligent free colored men were often found who would risk all for the elevation of their race. In such cases they would locate their schools in obscure alleys, where only one or two pupils at most, were allowed to enter at the same time, and these localities were changed every three or four weeks, in order to avoid suspicion, and whenever their nocturnal studies were closed they would separate in the same cautious manner.

Money was not the object, aim or reward that induced these men to assume these fearful risks, but they were pursued from an innate love of danger, a thirst for knowledge, an insatiable benevolence and the natural habits of secrecy and vigilance engendered by slavery.

These clandestine efforts of the bondsmen to secure even a slight share of education, as fore-shadowed in part second, were eventually destined, not only to be broken up, but many of its leaders and supporters were doomed to martyrdom for the heinous offense of imparting light, truth and knowledge to their brethren in bondage.

One of the safe-guards which the slaveholder was ever careful to throw around himself and family, consisted of a number of trained servants or spies, whose extirpation from the field labor depended upon their faithful detection and exposure of every word, action and incident transpiring on the plantation.

"Aristocracy," with its twin sister "arrogance," was the ruling passion of the slaveholder, and hence, these human chattels, who lived, moved and flourished only in their master's smile, and who might at a moment's notice, be reduced to the most grinding oppression, not only answered the ends of their education by copying the vicious, prejudices and cruelties of their owners, but often improved upon the original to such an extent as to utterly disown their progenitors, because they were of a darker hue than themselves, and thereby aiding in the inhuman process of perpetrating the same institution, and consigning their own flesh and blood to the gloomy dungeons of mental ignorance, misery and degradation.

In the year 1813, during the progress of the war with Great Britain, it became evident to the planters in the parish of Iberville that an unusual commotion existed among the slave population in that particular locality, and as the parish bordered on the Gulf of Mexico, near the anchorage of the British fleet, fears were entertained that the slaves were in secret league with the enemy, which might at any moment result in a general stampede from the Elysian fields of slavery, and an alliance with the invaders, or in a bloody massacre of the whites.

In view of this threatening state of things, the most stringent preventive measures were at once inaugurated, and hundreds of slaves under mere suspicion of being in possession of the secret, were put to the torture, without eliciting any disclosure, and many of them were executed, and the now agitated and alarmed planters.

In that portion of the parish nearest the Mississippi river, there lived an extremely wealthy French planter, named Andre de Bourville, whose most prized possession was a large number of slaves, among whom was one of superior energy and intelligence, named Cyrille. He was a fearless, active and persevering man, yet of a humane and docile temperament. As a reward for his faithful management of the plantation, Cyrille had been permitted to unite himself to the favorite house-maid of Madame de Bourville, whose name was Eulalie, and who was the acknowledged daughter of M. de Bourville by one of his slaves.

Cyrille having been a pupil in the "nocturnal schools," already mentioned, had obtained thereby, just a sufficient knowledge of the forbidden fruit to create an intense thirst for more, and every moment he could rest from labor, was diligently applied to the attainment of this earnestly desired result.

In due time, believing himself qualified to become a teacher of his fellow slaves, he took a few of the most trustworthy into his confidence, and twice or thrice in each week they regularly met over a small table in the midst of one of the great cypress swamps, which abounded in the lower parishes of Louisiana.

This island consisted of about an acre of solid earth in the midst of a desert bog, and was about three miles from the master's mansion. The means of access was by a submerged causeway of two large logs laid lengthways, and was about a quarter of a mile in length, the dark color of the water usual to these swamps rendered the causeway invisible and consequently, only known to the "scholars."

And thus these ostracized miniatures of the Deity, who are "no respecters of persons," were compelled by the decrees of American law, to "stoil" their way through a miasmatic bog, swarming with deadly reptiles, for the sole purpose of appeasing their longing thirst at this rude fountain of knowledge.

Cyrille, as we have said, was permitted to call the beautiful Creole Eulalie, his wife, and in order to satisfy her enquiries why he so regularly absented himself from her society twice or thrice every week, he was, at length, compelled to disclose the cause, and with some misgivings, take her into his confidence and admit her into the league. Then on each and every "school night," after Madame had retired, they would steal from the "Mansion," traverse the three miles to the invisible causeway, when the devoted husband would take the frail girl in his arms and bear her safely to their wild retreat. Where, if they were first acrossed the morass, they would build a fire, which served the double purpose of lighting their "rural academy" and driving away the swarming mosquitoes. Finally drawing forth their "Child's First Primer," each dusky pupil would again, and again pore over its soiled pages until the "Wee wee" hours bade them prepare to depart on their homeward journey, to their unrequited toil, and often to the overseer's lash, for failure to reach the field "on time."

This method of securing the boon of knowledge had been pursued for about eighteen months in that particular parish, when the panic connection with the British fleet, above related, transpired. But Cyrille, confident in the security of his asylum and the loyalty and shrewdness of his chosen pupils, continued the pursuit successfully. Sometimes approaching the causeway from one direction, and again from another. Finally, on a certain "school night" about the time of the panic, Madame de Bourville, was suddenly attacked by the "Coast Fever." Her favorite, Eulalie, was summoned to her bedside, when, lo! the girl was not to be found. Cyrille was sought with like success; the alarm was sounded, the neighborhood aroused, the blood-hounds unleashed and put upon the track of the fugitives, they dash to the foot of the submerged causeway, but there the water breaks the "scent." Again they dash off in diving lines only to return to the fatal spot; for three days the hunt continues without success. While Cyrille and his brave little band console themselves and, each other with the desperate alternative, "We can but die! Let us die like men!"

On the fourth day, and when the entire parish had joined in the pursuit, a consultation was held and it was determined that should be put to the torture in order to extract confession of their knowledge of the fugitive's retreat. This cruel alternative was adopted, and several of the slaves were reduced to the verge of the grave without success. Finally a young slave girl, a relative of Eulalie, to whom she had confided the secret, pointed out the submerged causeway, and in one short hour after the mangled corpses of Cyrille, Eulalie and their fourteen companions became food for the blood-hounds.

The skeletons of the murdered Cyrille and his male comrades were hung in chains beside the highway, to remind his surviving brethren that a similar fate awaited them on the commission of a similar offense.

This event caused the inauguration of a series of barbaric cruelties throughout the colony, toward the bondmen that struck terror to the hearts of the most courageous of their number, and its bloody record remains unaltered to the present day. The world, with its hundreds of millions of helpless, and inoffensive beings, were tortured and slain on the slightest suspicion of even desiring to enlighten their minds or improve their physical condition. The black code of Bicville was revived in all its revolting features and rigidly enforced. The Territorial Assembly passed laws inflicting the death penalty on any person, white or colored, who should be convicted of "teaching," "encouraging" or "convinced" at the instruction of the human chattels.

This "reign of terror" to the slave population, and its friends continued from 1813 to 1821, by which period the influx of the English, American, Scotch and German elements, with their various civilizing and humane influences, had become sufficiently strong to cause counteracting influences to prevail, a result of which was a modification of the "code noir," repeal of the death penalty, and other important changes tending to the relief of the oppressed.

From that era to the present, sentiments of humanity have, as a rule, replaced the sanguinary barbarism foreshadowed in our imperfect sketches. A more human spirit seems to have infused itself into the hitherto demoniac nature of the planters. By degrees the intercourse between master and slave became more familiar, more friendly, and at length culminated in a compromise which permitted the establishment of churches and Sabbath schools on many plantations, the effect of which was a partial enlightenment of the parents, and a thorough inculcation of the principles of virtue, honor and usefulness in the children.

This state of things continued, with varied success until the promulgation of the Edict of Emancipation in 1863—about forty years, during which period thousands have secured the rudiments of a literary education, and many have attained a degree of intellectual culture and refinement that reflects honor on their race.

To this intelligence, obtained at the fearful risks we have foreshadowed, the great State of Louisiana owes a large share of her preservation during our civil strife, in which the colored troops not only "fought nobly," but also exhibited a patriotic courage and faithful adherence to the highest principle of honor, patriotism and loyalty.

CINCINNATI DEPARTMENT.

Hack's Harangue.

Quite a number of leading young colored men met up town for some purpose and gradually turned from the topic of discussion, became very much wrought up because the heads of the official barrels had been broken into and the colored brother and voter, as is always the case, left out of the picture, for a moment, they were thinking of uniting in one general "one."

But it was only for a moment. Most any colored man knows that "in union there is strength" but it was impossible to find five men willing to combine for one given purpose, either to benefit themselves or some one else. Every colored man was by the same office, and by helping some one else, he destroys his own chance, and so it goes ad nauseam. But aside from this it is about time for those Republicans, who are so pleased to have you vote for them, and then after being elected, fill up their offices with white clerks, to know that there are many young colored men fully capable of holding clerkships, and that the colored man must be given a chance to show himself. It will be a positive shame if the present situation of affairs be allowed to continue, and we hope to be able to chronicle a move in this direction at an early day.

Another evil about Cincinnati is, that with all its boasted freedom, a colored man is served better in many Southern cities. He is here, take the innumerable eating houses about town, where a colored man can not eat, and in some is compelled either to go away back, on one side or in the kitchen. Some of the "blue veins" may eat at these places, but they are not all mankind by a great sight. Also the Cincinnati Southern Railroad, a road which the colored taxpayers of this city assisted, yet a colored man or lady is compelled to take smoking-car accommodations. This is even worse than the much abused "Mississippi," where, nevertheless, colored people get precisely what they pay for—even a Pullman Sleeper. Yet the colored people of Cincinnati bear these indignities as meekly as lambs. Should the old "Union League" be reconstituted, and the determined measures taken, all these things would be righted in a short while.

"How long, O Lord! how long" are we to wait for a "change."

We take great pleasure in copying "Phil's" neat and sarcastic paragraph from last week's Bulletin.

"We are in a query as to what became of the debating club which the young men were going to organize? We presume they

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are waiting to become proficient in the science taught at Mr. H. A. Academy of Science and Art, and which, we understand, they are making such energetic "aims" at.

Excellent "Philly" aims at Mr. Hogan's Academy of Billiards and pool, which has more students entered for the winter term than Gaine's High School—many attending both. "Philly" made a "carom" when she wrote that, and we believe could give the boys the 15 ball pool and beat them at pool.

There is some talk of reorganizing the Cincinnati Literary Society, which departed this life last spring. We would suggest that this society kill off all these chaps who have barely sense enough to "object" and "rise to the point of order"—then, perhaps, they can amount to something. At least we hope so.

"Wraign" correctly says, "No messenger of God should enter the pulpit after his sacred ermine (or dress coat) has been soiled by the slime of political paths." Right you are! and we would like for the Rev. correspondent out on Walnut Hills to take note of it, and drop those silly letters to "Mr. Garfield, Dear Sir," and "Mr. Hancock, Dear Sir," of Belmont and Anderson, says Garfield is a great man, "Henry Forté says the country is saved." The readers of last week's Leader must have been considerably cheered by these choice bits of eloquence, especially as it is only when we hear the words of our great American orators, that we can learn how truly great Garfield is, and how pleased we should be to know that the country is saved. In the words of the great Demosthenes, we would say to the above, go hire a hall!

The German met last week at the residence of Miss Watson, and after a very different program and a much pleasanter social chat adjourned to meet at Mr. Thomas Johnson's mansion, where quite an elaborate and extensive program will be rendered.

Quite a crowd gathered at Union Chapel on Seventh street, last Tuesday evening, to witness the concert given for the benefit of the church. Many of the local talent appeared in songs, declamations and piano instrumental.

On Thanksgiving night a grand concert will be given at Allen Hall, and a good time may be expected as only the best talent will appear.

A surprise was given to one of the Washington belles last week. Cleveland correspondent, please copy.

HACK.

The fascinating Miss Kate Weller returned home Saturday, after several week's visiting at Cleveland, much pleased with her visit.

George Barnett, of the M. & C. R. R. office, will spend Christmas in Indianapolis. Miss Florence Yeiser, of Frankfort, Ky., is visiting in our city, the guest of Miss M. Saunders, of Barr street.

Fred Anderson is always in a good humor.

Charles Hawkins has parted with that pretty mouthful of a girl.

Chas. Blackburn always keeps his word.

Herbert Clark is a good newspaper correspondent.

The gallant Dick Taylor left Tuesday for his home in Lexington, but will come over to spend the holidays in our city.

The Merry Knights give their second Social Hop Thanksgiving night.

Mrs. H. Dickson was for her guests, shortly, Miss Carrie Williams and Miss Georgie Clark, two handsome young ladies of Columbus, O.

All the girls are wearing Derby hats.

Several of the young gents had their ladies at the minstrel last week.

Jim Lee is the happiest man in town.

Rumor has it that we are soon to have some cake.

Mr. James L. Taylor is quite a beau among our young ladies.

Walnut Hills.

Miss Mary Weaver after an absence of several months, was at her post last Sunday in the Sunday-school and the members of her class were of course glad to see her.

Attend night school.

Mrs. Mary E. Crutisp, assistant superintendent of the A. M. E. Sunday school has removed to the city where she will probably live till spring.

Mrs. Sophia Daniels is now living at No. 302 Park Avenue, near Locust street.

Mr. Algernon Tolliver a graduate of the Gaine's High School is teaching at Leesburg, Ohio.

Miss Mattie E. Peyton, Miss Elvira A. Willis and Rev. W. H. Franklin were in the pastor's Bible Class last Sunday, and the discussion was as usual very interesting.

Miss Eliza Weaver, Miss Hester Ousley, Miss Mary E. Frye, Miss Tillie R. Bunch, Miss Nettie Hood, Eda Leda Pryor and many others deserve special mention for the general promptness and regularity where they attend Sunday-school.

Mrs. Caroline Mason, wife of Rev. Lewis Mason, Mrs. Lucinda Whitlow, and Mrs. Julia Turner were so unwell to be unable to attend church last Sunday.

The Dorcas Relief Society met last week at the residence of Mrs. Washington, on Chesnut street.

The First Baptist Church, Rev. J. Darnell pastor is doing well, and the Sunday-school is one of the best in the city.

Rev. B. M. Carson of Hillsboro, and Rev. B. W. Arnett were on the Hill last week the welcome guests of the A. M. E. pastor.

Mrs. Green Burrell of East Hill and her excellent little wife were at the little church around the corner, Sunday.

Mrs. Mary Smith, Mrs. Delphia Elkins, Mrs. Laura Webb, Mrs. Ella Coleman, Mrs. Mary Haskins, Mrs. Peter, H. Clarke and

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